

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 031000Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1601

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 599

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PO

SUBJ: INTERNAL DISSENSION IN POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPD)

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIAL IN PORTUGUESE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY, ITS POLITICAL COMMITTEE IS NOW DIVIDED OVER QUESTION OF HOW BEST TO DEAL WITH COMMUNIST PARTY AND OVER PERSON OF SECRETARY GENERAL. PARTY REPORTEDLY IN POOR FINANCIAL SITUATION AND HAS SUFFERED A NUMBER OF PHYSICAL ASSAULTS BY FAR LEFTISTS AT RECENT RALLIES. END SUMMARY.

1. MARCELO REBELO DE SOUSA, ASSISTANT EDITOR OF LIBERAL INDEPENDENT WEEKLY EXPRESSO, AND MEMBER OF PPD COMMITTEE OF OVERSEERS, RECENTLY DESCRIBED TO EMBOFF INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES WITHIN PARTY.

2. SOUSA SAID MANUEL ALEGRIA, INFORMAL LEADER OF PARTY'S RIGHT WING AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL, WHO HANDPICKED BY SA CARNEIRO, SACKED BY PPD POLITICAL COMMITTEE IN EARLY JANUARY WHEN SA CARNEIRO

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ABSENT FROM LISBON. AT SAME TIME LEFT WING GROUP IN POLITICAL

COMMITTEE TOOK OVER KEY SECRETARIAT SLOTS (PROPAGANDA, LABOR AND FINANCES). LEFTWING FACTION LED BY JORGE SA BORGES, AND INCLUDES JOSE MANUEL RAMOS, ALFREDO MORGADO, FERREIRA JUNIOR, AND ALEXANDRE BETTENCOURT. THEY ARE OPPOSED BY SA CARNEIRO, BALSEMAO, AND MAGALHAES MOTA, AMONG OTHERS.

3. KEY ISSUES DIVIDING TWO FACTIONS ARE A) WHO SHOULD BE SECRETARY-GENERAL; AND B) HOW BEST TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY. SA BORGES FACTION (WHICH CONSTITUTES ABOUT HALF OF 16-MAN POLITICAL COMMITTEE) BELIEVES THAT SA CARNEIRO TOO COMPROMISED WITH OLD REGIME, THAT HIS HEALTH NOT GOOD ENOUGH, AND THAT A MORE FORCEFUL LEADER NEEDED. IT HOPES TO PUT SA BORGES IN AS SECRETARY GENERAL.

4. MAIN DIVISIVE ISSUE BETWEEN TWO GROUPS HOWEVER, IS HOW TO DEAL WITH PCP. SA CARNEIRO FACTION SEEKS PRE-ELECTORAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN COALITION PARTIES ON ELECTORAL RULES OF GAME AND OVER CERTAIN FEATURES OF NEW CONSTITUTION. DIFFICULTY IS THAT AFTER PASSAGE OF UNITARY LABOR CONFEDERATION LAW PS NOT GENUINELY INTERESTED IN SUCH AN "UNDERSTANDING", OR AT LEAST THAT IS OPINION OF SA CARNEIRO. SA BORGES GROUP ALSO WANTS AN UNDERSTANDING WITH PCP BUT UNLIKE OTHER FACTION IS WILLING TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITHOUT PS.

5. SA CARNEIRO GROUP FEELS PPD'S BEST HOPE OF ACHIEVING WHAT IT WANTS IN SHORT AND LONG RUN IS TO CONCENTRATE ON COOPERATING WITH SOCIALISTS. THEY SEE PCP AS SEEKING TO DESTROY CDS, MRPP, AND PS IN THAT ORDER, AND STATE THAT PPD-PCP "UNDERSTANDING" WITHOUT PS WOULD FURTHER WEAKEN PS AND PLAY INTO HANDS OF PCP STRATEGISTS.

6. REBELO DE SOUSA ALSO STATED THAT PPD FINANCIAL SITUATION NOT GOOD. PARTY FUNDS FROM BUSINESS HAVE DRIED UP FOR MOST PART, AND PCP CONTROL OVER BANK WORKERS MEANS THEY CAN SPOT MONEY TRANSFERS TO PPD. UNLESS FUNDING AVAILABLE SOON, PARTY FEELS IT MAY NOT BE ABLE ADEQUATELY TO FINANCE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN.

7. COMMENT: REBELO DE SOUSA PESSIMISTIC ABOUT OUTLOOK FOR WESTERNSTYLE DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL AFTER RECENT EVENTS IN OPORTO. RECENT PPD RALLIES HAVE BEEN HARASSED BY FAR LEFTISTS
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AND HE SEES FURTHER VIOLENCE AGAINST PPD AS ELECTION DRAWS NEAR. HE MILDLY HOPEFUL THAT HE AND OTHERS IN SA CARNEIRO WING OF PPD LEADERSHIP CAN CONVINCE PPD TO MAKE NO ALLIANCES OR UNDERSTANDINGS WITH PCP WHICH DO NOT INCLUDE PS.
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